The Restitutional Assemblage

The Art of Transformative Justice at Parramatta Girls Home, Australia

Anna Reading

INTRODUCTION

This chapter approaches restitution from a transformative justice perspective, illustrated with the example of an applied cultural memory project for human rights and justice at Parramatta Girls Home in Australia. It develops, through this case study, the original concept of the “restitutional assemblage,” theoretically modeled from analytical tools drawn from sociology, media, and memory studies.

Restitution after war, atrocity, colonialism, and genocide is conventionally conceived of as economic, primarily involving the return of property, be that capital or what Pierre Bourdieu has termed cultural capital or “accumulated labor” in forms that may not be purely fiscal but which may involve cultural goods, artefacts, or language. Restitution has largely been articulated within a transitional justice framework that assumes the finitude of restitution completed through a particular act or acts. However, this assumption is counter to the fact that violence and conflict are rarely a one-off event and the journey of reconciliation and healing is ongoing for those directly affected by human rights abuses in ways that impact on second and third generations. Transitional restitution models also overlook the ways in which human rights abuses are situated within a wider context of social and economic inequalities.

2 See Aaron Hass In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Second Generation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), and Schwab, G. Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). However, there is also research around indigenous peoples that shows this is not only about the passing on of trauma from the past but involves on-going structural violence and oppression. See for example, Laurence Kirkmayer, Josep Ghone and Joshua Moses, “Rethinking Historical Trauma,” Transgenerational Psychiatry 51, no. 3 (2014): 299–319.
that are ongoing and which require transformation as part of the restitutional process.

This chapter suggests that instead of viewing restitution as a one-off, discrete, or bounded process toward a goal, it is better understood as an assemblage of practices that involve unfinished processes and interventions that operate across multiple domains. I argue that while part of the process of restitution may be material and economic, there are also non-material realities at stake that involve laborious, energetic processes within and across domains that are political, judicial, symbolic, affective, spiritual, and cultural.

The chapter begins by examining restitution within transitional and transformative justice frameworks, before then highlighting some of the tensions between indigenous forms of restitution and Western counterparts that suggest the need to remodel restitutional processes. I then outline the model of what I have termed the restitutional assemblage before then illustrating how this works in practice by applying it to the case study of the struggles for justice by Parragirls, survivors of the Parramatta Girls Home located in the city of Parramatta in Western Sydney, Australia. The women’s work through The Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project (PFFP Memory Project) came to my attention when I was working in Australia at the University of Western Sydney between 2011 and 2013. The precinct site constitutes Australia’s longest continuous site of female containment of women and girls. It dates from 1821, beginning with the foundation of the “Female Factory,” which was subsequently a workhouse, an asylum, and a prison for women with an adjacent Roman Catholic orphanage that became Parramatta Girls Home.

In 2012 I participated in a “docu protest” at the site of the former Parramatta Girls Home that involved meeting with women survivors who had been placed in the home as children and documenting with them the site and some of the memories it held for them through photographs, videos, and drawings. The PFFP Memory Project group continued to work for recognition and restitution and, in 2015, the Australian government committed

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4 Western Sydney University’s Parramatta Campus uses the restored and repurposed buildings of a protestant girls’ orphanage. One of the offices that I used was a former cell. I had the privilege of being walked around that site by Bonney Djuric, who interpreted the buildings and landscape for me and provided historic context to my understanding of where I worked. Djuric has led the struggle in Australia of the PFFP Memory Project along with other survivors and activists who seek international recognition and restitution for abuse that took place at Parramatta Girls Home.
$100 million for the restoration of historic buildings at the Girls Home site, the first public act toward recognizing the historic and restitutional importance of the site. The PFFP Memory Project has also gained assistance from the Australian government through the Australia Council, an arts funding and advisory body, as well as being supported over three years by Arts New South Wales. I draw on the work of the PFFP Memory Project not only because of my minor personal involvement, but because it is richly illustrative of how restitution might be reconceived as an on-going assemblage of acts understood as transformative justice in practice. The PFFP Memory Project brings together different elements of restitution through art, activism, and social engagement working out of the historic institutions of the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct to connect past to present empowering people and transforming the future.

RESTITUTION WITHIN TRANSITIONAL AND TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE FRAMEWORKS

Within a transitional justice framework, restitution is normatively considered as one of five categories within the broader category of reparation understood in terms of various measures pursued by the state to redress human rights violations. Thus, the United Nations outlines five kinds of reparation: restitution, satisfaction, rehabilitation, compensation, and guarantees of non-repetition. In this reparative model, symbolic forms of reparation, such as apology, public acknowledgement, and memorialization, are not usually considered as falling within the domain of restitution, but rather fall under the category of satisfaction. Restitution is defined as seeking to restore the victim to the situation before the gross violations took place. Restitution within the transitional justice framework of reparations does not formally exclude from its definitions the differential impact of human rights violations on people arising from social inequalities and varying affordances of power and resources. In practice, human rights violations impact children and the children of survivors differently from

adults, and harms are amplified by situations of poverty. Similarly, the poor often suffer disproportionately in relation to richer members of society in contexts of human rights abuses: in East Timor, for example, of the estimated 102,800 conflict-related deaths during the 25 years of Indonesian occupation from December 1975 to October 1999, 84,200 people died not from being directly killed by Indonesian forces but from the occupation making hunger and illness more acute.

A transformative justice perspective, in contrast, recognizes that social, cultural, and economic inequalities will have contributed to human rights violations with differential harms and will then seek to transform those inequalities for the future. According to Paul Gready and Simon Robins, reparations in this regard offer the best mechanism for addressing economic and social inequalities. The most effective approach is for reparations to address not only the harms that have been done, but also to address the context of acts of violence including the political, economic, and social structures that underpinned the harms. As Gready and Robins argue:

the role of reparations in unequal societies is not to return poor victims to poverty and discrimination, but to transform their circumstances and in so doing address the injustice that drives conflict.

Building on this, I suggest that restitution in practice involves ongoing transformative actions across different domains in which it is recognized that it is not only impossible but ethically undesirable to return to the original situation prior to gross human rights violations. It is undesirable because when gross human rights violations occurred, they took place within a situation that included inequality and already established structural violence. To return to this situation then ignores the unequal distribution of resources, the social hierarchy, and systemic oppression of periods of human rights violations. Restitution within a transformative justice framework therefore recognizes the work of transformation of the individual to whom harm was done as well as to the structures that may have contributed to the gross human rights violations in the first place. This is particularly evident with gross human rights violations that are against women and girls, which historically have been situated

9 Ibid.
10 Simon Robins, “From Transitional to Transformative Justice: A New Agenda for Practice,” in this volume.
11 Ibid.
and fueled by a structure of gender inequality. The next section rethinks restitution through surfacing the tensions and differences arising between Western and indigenous understandings of restitution.

RETHINKING RESTITUTION

The mainstream understanding of restitution within Western societies rests on the return of advantage: it involves the return of goods, or the payment of money or goods to address loss. Restitution in Western societies is largely situated within a legalistic tradition framed through an assumption of capitalist property rights: indeed, it is not without significance that the foundational text on reparations involves a legal ruling on the return of a factory. The underlying imperative is that restitution is a materialized transactional act that is bounded and maybe completed. But a non-material version of restitution is suggested by the science of physics: in the scientific sense of the word “restitution” is defined as a return of energy. This non-material dimension might be understood in human terms as the on-going emotional and spiritual labor involved in restitutional processes that suggest the need to include recognition of spiritual and affective losses, as well as the material and economic.

It is important to note that much of the Western literature on restitution and approaches to it are modelled on studies of European states that developed forms of restitution in the twentieth century for the victims of Nazism from the 1930s and 40s. Elazar Barkan in *The Guilt of Nations* examines German repatriation of property to Jewish people, showing how this radically changed how restitution was framed in terms of defining what might be claimed and by whom. The study looks at how, from the 1930s onwards, the German government confiscated Jewish property “through numerous methods and with varying intensity.” This included not just the more obvious confiscation of houses, but also the charging of flight taxes and the penalty imposed on Jewish people after Kristallnacht. The process of victims of Nazism giving testimony to gain economic restitution has also then become part of a broader process.

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12 See *Permanent Court of Arbitration, Chorzow Factory Case (Ger. V. Pol.),* (1928) P.C.I.J., Sr. A, No.17 at 29. A summary of this is provided at [www.redress.org/what-is-reparation/what-is-reparation](http://www.redress.org/what-is-reparation/what-is-reparation). Within religious texts restitution is also framed in terms of property. In the Bible, see Exodus 22:1, 506, 14; Leviticus: 6: 2: 5 – although the story of Zacchaeus includes a formal apology as well as the return of property in Romans 10: 10.


14 Ibid., 4
of restitutinal assemblage: a cultural act of “story-telling” to gain economic restitution becomes part of the restitutinal process.\textsuperscript{15}

However, patterns of restitution claims reveal major differences between Western and indigenous justice systems. Western justice systems largely evolved through the separation of the church, state and judiciary, based on adversarial modalities of justice led by expert strangers on the part of victims, addressing primarily the economic and material dimensions of restitution. Western systems are also time bound and function by isolating acts from the wider society. In contrast, many indigenous justice systems tend to be more open in terms of temporality as well as being consensus based and/or involving those affected looking at the wider context for the crime or injustice.\textsuperscript{16} Indeed, indigenous justice systems model how holistic restitution includes the domain of property, the symbolic and affective in the form of an apology, as well as the spiritual domain in the form of spiritual cleansing and the return to the community of spiritual well-being.\textsuperscript{17}

Restitution has become part of broader struggles and processes for justice sought by indigenous peoples worldwide under the general claims made in relation to the struggles for native title or indigenous land claims as well as other abuses including forced migration and acts of genocide. Mark Everingham shows how in Australia the idea of discrete or completed restitution is complicated by the economic theft of land combined with the forced removal of children to indigenous boarding schools that stripped indigenous people of cultural knowledge, including language and religion as well as family ties. The Western idea of restitution as the return to a state that preceded the violation is meaningless in such a context.\textsuperscript{18} This accords with testimonial evidence by indigenous people from New South Wales in Australia that suggests the complicated layers of practice required for restitution:

I think to give us compensation in the form of some land acquisition would go very well into helping start stable family relationships and stable generations from here on in.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{15} Julia Vom Den Knesbeck, The Roma Struggle for Compensation in Post War Germany (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire, 2011).


\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{19} Australian Human Rights Commission, \textit{Bringing them Home – The Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their...
Land and property are thus key. But so, too, is language, culture and identity:

Our languages provide more than just a way to talk to each other. They provide a way for us to interpret the reality we see around us. The words we use to name things, to describe feelings, understandings, and each other, carry meanings particular to us. If we lose these words, we lose part of ourselves ... when our children were stolen from our families, one of the things that happened was that the language learning cycles were broken. Transmission from generation to generation is a crucial link in language maintenance. Taking the children away broke this link.^[19]

Other testimonials request the importance of apology at a variety of levels from the personal to the state across different generations. The violence of colonialism and colonial genocide involved a multiplicity of different atrocities over time with social and economic inequalities that are on-going. Hence, restitution within the context of the on-going legacies of structural colonial violence is articulated within the stories and testimonies of indigenous Australians in terms of the need for an assemblage of practices.

Other work on indigenous people and restitution in relation to abuses of colonialism and/or indigenous peoples shows that Western models of restitution cannot take account of the significance of the loss of memory and damage to spirituality linked to land and culture. Ana Margarita Ramos, in examining land claims by the Mapuche people in Argentina, suggests that Western models of restitution fail to understand the embodied spiritual connectedness that is key to the return of lands for forcibly removed people.^[20] This spiritual impact has been shown by Manduhai Buyandelger in relation to the Shamanic spiritual losses felt by Mongolian communities under the twentieth century USSR communist regime that imprisoned and abused shamans, particularly women.^[21] This spiritual dimension has also been noted as requiring a trans-generational approach in relation to forcibly displaced Roma people in Europe.^[22]

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Similar approaches are suggested by Jeff Corntassel, Chaw-Win-Is, and T’lakwadzi in relation to indigenous peoples in Canada. As in other former colonies, French and British invaders forcibly removed many hundreds of thousands of indigenous children from their families. Children were stripped from their indigenous languages, cultures, and spiritual and affective communities and relocated thousands of miles distant to be raised by strangers in Christian boarding schools. As a response, there has been a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Canada which began its work in June 2008, and was officially completed in June 2015.

However, the TRC has been criticized for configuring indigenous history only in relation to the history of colonialism. Some indigenous people seek instead to use a haa-huu-pah hac, an indigenous story-telling model to enable another form of restitution. The model solidifies ancestral history, connecting indigenous history and homelands, stolen and squatted by settlers, to the present day. Transformation is at its heart: haa-huu-pah hac, according to Nuhl-Chah-Nulth Elder Cha-Chin-Sun-Up, seeks to make the world good.

The process is one of re-storying, decentering colonizers’ narratives, restoring communities with core values with an emphasis on community rather than individual resistance.

Such tensions between indigenous and Western approaches to restitution, alongside other critiques, have led to attempts to broaden restitution within transitional justice. Ann Rigney suggests that a variety of mnemonic practices are needed in relation to restitution in which judicial processes, as well as truth and reconciliation commissions, are combined with other public performances that might include formal apology, memorials, and public acts of remembrance. Drawing on the experiences of post-Apartheid South Africa, Rosemarie Buikema argues that in addition to formal judicial processes and public acts, art and artists rework narratives implicitly to acknowledge that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission did not mark the end of the transitional justice process. Similarly, Damien Short examines the political theatre of apology in relation to restitution in Australia, which has created moments

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25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., 137.
27 Ibid., 139.
that make some amends to indigenous people. However, he points out that public apologies have been insufficiently followed up by compensation measures, as well as being contradicted by the continuing abuse of indigenous human rights in Australia’s Northern Territories. The latter example suggests that this broader approach to restitution may retain challenges if simply incorporated within transitional justice.

My argument is that restitution is more usefully conceived as an assemblage of acts and processes across space and time that includes seeking transformations of material and non-material reality that might be understood as emotional, spiritual, and affective capital along with transformations of material inequalities and economic capital. Literature on the notion of emotional capital from the “affective turn” in cultural theory and the social sciences shows the cultural, social, and political significance of emotion and affect to individuals and societies, a significance which has clear but undervalued implications for human rights work. Sarah Ahmed argues that the affective economy involves emotional labor that accrues value as emotional capital.

Abuses of human rights, I would suggest, have deep and unequal impacts on emotional labor and emotional capital. Relatedly, the spiritual dimensions of an individual and community are also, arguably, a resource. As a resource with value and accrued capital access can be denied or limited by those with more power, spiritual and emotional capital are vandalized, stolen, misappropriated, and devalued as part of colonization, warfare, and human rights abuses. The non-material reality of spiritual and emotional capital is then integral to the restitutional assemblage. While this idea of an assemblage that includes the material and non-material or energetic (including the emotional, affective, and spiritual) might be incorporated within a transitional justice framework, the emphasis here on the value of process situates it within the growing transformative justice approach. This next section models this in more theoretical detail as well as examines the implied differences between a transitional justice and transformative justice perspectives.

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31 Holmes, Non-material Reality, 34.
34 There is a growing body of work on spiritual capital. See Mathew Guest, “The Search of Spiritual Capital. The Spiritual as a Cultural Resource,” in Flanagan and Jupp, A Sociology of Spirituality.
THE RESTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLAGE

The concept and practice of the restitutional assemblage proposed here differs from the principle of the full spectrum of reparations outlined in the U.N.’s Basic Principles and Guidelines in a number of ways. First, the bounded noun “restitution” suggests a process that is time limited and defined from the beginning. In contrast, the adjectival collective noun of the restitutional assemblage suggests an emphasis on a process that is not time limited or defined from the beginning. The concept draws on the insights of Deleuze and Guattari in A Thousand Plateaus, in which they suggest a way of thinking that allows for a constellation of heterogeneous elements to self-organize around a body. The body suggested by Deleuze and Guattari is one that extends beyond ideas of the individual body of classical humanism into the idea of “forceful bodies” politic. The restitutional assemblage coined here thus models recognition of what Marcus and Saka see as emergent and heterogeneous processes, some of which may be self-organized by those on the ground, which can include survivors and survivors’ families, around, with, and sometimes against the power of intergovernmental agencies or state powers. As Ong and Collier suggest, an assemblage is the:

product of multiple determinations that are not reducible to a single logic. The temporality of an assemblage is emergent. It does not always involve new forms, but forms that are shifting, in formation, or at stake. As a composite concept, the term “global assemblage” suggests inherent tensions: global implies broadly encompassing, seamless, and mobile; assemblage implies heterogeneous, contingent, unstable, partial, and situated.

Paul Frosh and Amit Pinchevski, in their work on witnessing of atrocity, conceive of the assemblage first in terms of “the composition of material practices and discursive formations – states of things and bodies, and states of utterances and expressions.”

35 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2003).
Second, these material practices and discursive formations are subject to what they term “territorializing processes” which may be understood as forces that seek to consolidate the assemblage as a functional entity. In turn, this is then subject to what Frosh and Pinchevski term “de-territorializing processes” which are “the forces undermining synthesis and bringing transformation.”

They add that with the assemblage and any subsequent analysis, one should make a distinction between “the material and expressive properties of the phenomenon” while also being attentive to the forces that change or consolidate the assemblage that may include “the structures of media organizations, professional practices, habits of audience interpretation, and so on.” Further, any analysis of the assemblage seeks to understand it in terms of changing patterns and associations of multi-scalar links and levels.

How then might the concept of the assemblage be extended to rethinking processes and practices of restitution? The restitutional assemblage may be modelled in terms of material practices and discursive formations that are continually subject to processes that work to make secure or consolidate restitution as a recognizable entity, and at the same time this is subject to forces that mobilize transformation, change, and emergence to meet the on-going needs of those suffering loss of life, land, liberty, and/or language. In any analytic approach to restitution, one should thus distinguish between the material and expressive properties of the restitutional assemblage while tracing and analyzing the trajectories of transformation and consolidation secured through judicial review and state policy, professional and “expert” practices, as well as processes of change and emergence mobilized by, for example, survivors and activists and on-the-ground arts projects.

For clarity, Table 11.1 outlines a model of the restitutional assemblage. It summarizes some of the suggested, though not exclusive, restitutional domains. It includes examples of processes that may consolidate or create change within restitutional states or forms.

In the following section, I explore how elements of the restitutional assemblage summarized in Table 11.1 work in practice in relation to the Parramatta Girls Home in Western Sydney, Australia. I explore local, national, and transnational struggles by survivors and activists to gain recognition, justice, and structural transformation for women and girls through the PFFP Memory Project. Human rights violations against women and girls took place at the site over 175 years. The site may be understood as one node in a global system of intersectional gendered colonial violence institutionalized through female laundries, factories, workhouses, orphanages, mental institutions, and boarding schools.
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**Table 11.1. Model of the restitutions assemblage**
PARRAMATTA GIRLS HOME: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The former site of the Parramatta Girls Home is in a precinct of Parramatta in Western Sydney in New South Wales, Australia. Western Sydney is the fastest growing region of Australia in terms of population and industry. The site, derelict for many years, consists of a valuable precinct of urban land containing buildings, walkways, fences, walls, and courtyards that provide important material evidence and traces of what constitutes the longest continuous site of institutionalized female containment of girls and women in Australia. For years, the site was threatened with demolition with commercial plans to turn it into a car park, bingo hall, and residential housing. Following decades of lobbying, campaigning, and restitutitional work by a survivors group called Parragirls, on November 14, 2017, Parramatta Female Factory and Institutional Precinct was inscribed as a National Heritage Site.

Between 1821 and 1847, the site was a Female Factory for women convicts transported to Australia from the United Kingdom and its colonies; it was then changed into what was termed “an Invalid and Lunatic asylum” in 1847. Children were kept in what became a Roman Catholic orphanage between 1844 until 1866, when it became a state-owned institution known as Parramatta Girls Home, between 1887–1974.42 After 1974, it remained a state-owned institution but was renamed Kamballa and Taldree Children’s Shelter. In 1980, the Department of Corrective Services took possession of the main buildings, where it established the Norma Parker Detention Centre for Females. A Children’s Centre continued to operate on the site until 1983. The Norma Parker Detention Centre was the last institution to be closed in the precinct in 2008, although the land remained in the NSW government hands.43

The buildings at Parramatta in Western Sydney are located on the land of the Burramattagal people of the Darug. This is a place of great significance to indigenous women, particularly for birthing, since it is where the sweet water of the Parramatta River meets the salt water that comes up river from the ocean of Sydney harbor. The PFFP Memory Project states on its website, “The story of the local indigenous people is still here today; they can be felt in the walls and halls of the institutions and beneath the culverts and streets of Parramatta.” Part of the restitutitional work has involved the telling of the individual stories of women, as well as the campaign to have the site listed as part of Australia’s national heritage, along with recognition through its

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membership in the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and campaign for UNESCO World Heritage status.

The state-owned “welfare system,” established on the original site of the Roman Catholic Orphan School and operating under many guises, including Parramatta Girls Home and Kamballa and Taldree Children’s Centre, is held in living memory by survivors, witnesses, and perpetrators. The site served a dual purpose of both reformatory and orphanage. Some of the girls committed to the home were indigenous and belonged to the Stolen Generations. These were children of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who were forcibly taken from their families by various church missions and Australian federal and state government agencies.

The girls experienced very little education inside the institution and instead were used as a form of slave labor in a climate of bullying and abuse. The site included basement rooms where girls were raped and sexually abused by male staff.44 Many girls were forced to do laundry work. Those who were pregnant had their children taken from them at birth.45 The girls in the institution were allowed no personal possessions and slept in dormitories in uniforms provided by the state. They showered en masse, watched and abused by prison officers. There were no doors allowed on toilets or showers and there were no personal lockers. Body searches were an everyday part of the routine. All mail was censored and visitors restricted to once a week. Punishments included standing still for hours, scrubbing concrete and wooden floors with a “toothbrush or brick” scrubbing brush, and isolation while being fed on bread and water. In the later period of the institution anti-psychotic drugs were used to sedate and control girls.46

The struggles in relation to Parramatta Girls Home exemplify local, national, and transnational restitutional processes: the site represents in microcosm a worldwide system of institutionalized colonial practices that involved the state- and church-sanctioned control and abuse of girls and women as well as processes of response that have been expressed at various levels and across different domains. The site of containment – and others like it – was integral to the invasion, colonization, and genocidal violence by the British against indigenous people in Australia. At the same time, historically, this was entangled with the punishment, forced migration, or transportation and social and ethnic cleansing of the UK poor, ethnically unwanted (especially Anglo-Romani or gypsies) and politically challenging (such as the Tolpuddle Martyrs). Such institutions of containment that arose in the nineteenth century were variously

44 Bonney Djuric, Abandon all Hope; A History of Parramatta Girls Industrial School (Perth: Chargan Ltc, 2011).
45 Ibid.
called workhouses, laundries, and asylums and shared particular features in the UK, Ireland, Australia, and North America: they imprisoned and enslaved girls and women, usually against their will. Women and girls were contained in these kinds of institutions from the late 1700s to the 1990s. They were usually required to perform menial labor, predominantly laundry work for the church and state prison systems in the colonies, for no pay.

In Parramatta, upwards of 30,000 women and girls passed through the precinct’s institutions between 1821–1986; of these around 8,000 were convict women and children (1821–1847), 8,000 passed through during the orphanage period and 14,000 during the Girls Home/Kamballa Period 1887–1983. Many were sent there simply because they were “inconvenient” to their families or communities.

THE RESTITUTIONAL PROCESS

Restitution in this context cannot be reduced to a singular act of the Australian state returning property to a person or indeed a collective. Rather, the restitutional process requires and involves multiple domains and trajectories that are multi-layered, process-based, and emergent – an assemblage. In this Section, I examine both good and bad practices in relation to each of the theoretical domains of the restitutional assemblage outlined in Table 11.1 for the Parramatta Girls Home site in Australia. It is worth pointing out that although theoretically the model of the assemblage may include the judicial, political, symbolic, spiritual, and affective domains in what appears to be equal measure, analyzing the restitutional assemblage in practice reveals these are uneven and entangled. The concept is thus useful analytically in revealing how some domains seem more amplified than others: this, in turn, might then suggest the need on the ground for more support and resources to go into domains hitherto neglected or marginalized.

47 James M. Smith, Ireland’s Magdalen Laundries and the Nation’s Architecture of Containment (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).


The judicial domain of the restitutional assemblage for the Parramatta Girls Home has been articulated through judicial hearings and reports. In 2004, there was an Australian Senate Enquiry: this was conducted by the Community Affairs Committee and involved twenty former residents of the Parramatta Girls Home giving public statements about what they had endured at the site. 52 Between September 16, 2014 to March 27, 2017, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse held an investigation into abuses at a wide range of past and present Australian institutions with children under their care. The Commission held 57 public hearings and heard from 1,200 witnesses across all Australian state capital cities. 53 Criminal charges were laid in late 2016 with a final report and recommendations handed down by the Commission in early 2017, including statements by sixteen women who were subjected to historic physical and sexual assault and abuse at Parramatta Girls Home. The report on Case Study No. 7, on the Parramatta Training


School for Girls and Institution for Girls at Hay, outlines the process of inquiry into these institutions that involves a systematic investigation of child sexual abuse at the institutions and individual case hearings through “private sessions.” According to the report,

By 5 September 2014, the Royal Commission had held 2,318 private sessions and more than 1,294 people were waiting to attend one. We are including accounts from these sessions in our interim and final reports in a de-identified form.

The judicial domain is also linked to processes in the second domain of politics, with mixed impact and outcomes: this includes state, national, or local politics as well as the various struggles by on-the-ground activists directly linked to the cause, or who take up the cause in relation to broader nonviolent struggles. In terms of national politics, the campaign for recognition of the harm and abuse done to those known as Forgotten Australians resulted in Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, in 2009, giving a formal apology to those who were in state care as children: this includes an estimated figure of 500,000 child migrants who were committed to care homes and who experienced various forms of violence, abuse and sexual assault. Thus, the political apology to Forgotten Australians included those victims and survivors of Parramatta Girls Home and served in some way to mobilize an element of the specific restitutal process for individuals and the community around the site. Other state and intrastate work includes the ritual planting by the former governor of New South Wales, Marie Bashir, of a Calleestimon (Bottle Brush) and Wattle native flowering trees, representing Forgotten Australians to commemorate victims on Children’s Day in 2014 on the grounds of the Girls Home.

Not all restitutial practices are necessarily positive: the self-organized work of the PFFM Memory Project suggests that some of the institutionally generated restitutional practices in the political domain in relation to Parramatta Girls Home are problematic. For example, the then New South Wales Premier, Nathan Rees, gave a public apology in 2009 at a ceremony at Sydney’s Botanic Gardens and unveiled with Community Services Minister Linda Burney what was hailed as a public memorial in the form of a plaque

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55 Ibid.
56 Forgotten Australians, Chapter 11, “Recognition of Care Givers,” Recommendation 34 part 11.46 states that the Commonwealth and State Governments, in conjunction with the Churches and agencies, must provide funding for the erection of suitable memorials commemorating care leavers.
to the children who suffered in care in New South Wales. However, Parragirls continue to mobilize for a more appropriate memorial, since the plaque is small and located in an obscure part of the gardens, which is difficult to locate, rendering public impact minimal.\textsuperscript{57} The plaque is also felt to be inadequate because it is sited many kilometres distant from places where abuses, including those at Parramatta Girls Home, took place, which leaves “a major hole in public memory and thus to justice.”\textsuperscript{58} The connection to the human rights abuses at the Parramatta Girls Home are only implied rather than made explicit, meaning that only survivors themselves would make the connection. In addition, the public apology did not recognize any need for economic compensation, which angered survivors. Consequently, the attempt to make secure and consolidate part of the restitutional assemblage that included the public ceremony and monument was then destabilized by a protester, Wendy Just, who stood up wearing a T-shirt with “Retribution Now” written on it.\textsuperscript{59}

The third suggested domain of the restitutional assemblage – the symbolic – is in practice entangled with other domains, especially the judicial and the political, but also the affective and spiritual. The work of the Parragirls is affective as well as symbolic, with the latter having the wider objective of mobilizing restitutional processes in the political and judicial domains. Thus, memory activities mobilize restitutional processes across restitutional domains – symbolic work secures judicial proceedings, but judicial processes also then activate further symbolic work. For example, the three days of public hearings by the Royal Commission into the Parramatta Girls Home in 2014 led to reports in the Sydney Morning Herald and Australian Telegraph on-line as well as the hearings being reported on the national TV channel, ABC, with witnesses testifying to sexual and physical abuse at the site.\textsuperscript{60}

The twenty-first century symbolic restitutional work builds on memories of earlier symbolic work in the twentieth century, which included media reports of abuses at the Parramatta Girls Home in *The Australian* that span over more than four decades. Bellamy notes that feminist campaigns in relation to the abuses against girls at the site had begun as early as 1946, which resulted in girls under the age of 12 no longer being sent there (although admission registers suggest that some girls aged between 10–12 were in fact still admitted there for some years). In the 1960s, Parramatta Girls Home was the target of a feminist campaign to close the site, led by the Australian feminist Bessie Guthrie, who

\textsuperscript{57} Djuric, Personal Communication.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{59} Lewis Blayse, *Parramatta Girls Home: Or Eyes to the Floor*, /http://lewisblayse.net/2014/01/26/parramatta-girls-home-or-eyes-to-the-floor/.

\textsuperscript{60} Parker, “Parramatta Girl’s Home Resident Reveals Despair.”
established the first women’s refuge in Australia. Campaigns for reform by the Australian Women’s Liberation Movement in July 1973 led to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s broadcasting “This Day Tonight.” The documentary was an exposure of some of the abuse at Parramatta Girl’s Home as well as the related Hay Girls Institution. The television documentary at that time led to public protests by women, which, in turn, in April 1974 led to the closure of the Parramatta Girls Home, although it then re-opened under another name.

Parallel with these developments at state level is the symbolic restitutional campaign by the PFFP Memory Project to have the site internationally recognized as an International Site of Conscience (ISC). In practice, this means that the ISC project, along with the Parragirls campaign, are listed as members of the ICSC. The PFFP Memory Project is the first and only site thus far listed as a member by the ICSC in Australia. Other sites that have been publicly listed as members by the ICSC include the Museum of Romany Culture in the Czech Republic and the Martin Luther King Jr. National historic site in the United States. The ICSC thus assists the PFFP Memory project in Australia in its efforts to globalize its local struggle for justice through connecting its concerns with an international historical picture of human rights abuses that include other historic institutional child welfare systems. Specifically, the ICSC compares the work of the PFFP Memory Project and its struggles for justice for the abuses that took place at the site of Parramatta Girls Home to the related struggles to highlight the abuses that took place at the Magdalene Laundries and The Good Shepherd Convent, a significant site which marks where many hundreds of young women were abused and forced to perform hard labor in Ireland. Hence the abuses at Parramatta Girls Home cease to be understood as a local issue to Sydney or even a national site for Australia, and instead are recognized within the wider (post) colonial context of church

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62 The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) is an international network of more than 200 historic sites across 55 countries where human suffering has taken place. The ICSC aims to recognize, preserve, and connect sites, and thus to mobilize memories in struggles for justice. They also seek to support members in their work to campaign for sites of abuse to be used as places of learning in struggles for contemporary human rights.
63 See www.sitesofconscience.org/members/
and state sanctioned institutional historical abuse against women and girls. This, in turn, assembles and mobilizes global struggles for gender justice.66

The symbolic domain also involves knowledge mobilized through academic conferences organized by the PFFP Memory Project that have generated a growing number of academic studies, including this study, as well as sociological, political, and historical research concerning Parramatta Girls Home and its related earlier institutions.67 These studies have been mobilized by and connected with broader discussions of the Stolen and Forgotten Generations – indigenous children who were taken away from their families to be raised in various kinds of foster and institutional care, which resulted in a loss of family, land, culture, and language68 – or in relation to unlawful non-citizens and indigenous youth.69 Some accounts derive from academics who are themselves survivors of the Parramatta Girls Home, such as Lynette Aitken. Her research discusses her personal journey of a self “mortified” by institutionalization that was momentarily articulated within academia, a place that initially sought to silence her attempts to incorporate her own story.70 Other academic work that can be included as part of the restitutinal assemblage includes Corrinne Franklin’s Belonging to Bad: Ambiguity, Parramatta Girls and the Parramatta Girls Home, which uses fieldwork with Parragirls activating their stories of the site in ways that reconfigure and challenge established views of “belonging.”71 Some academic work has been supported by an Australian Research Council grant awarded to the University of New South Wales, with the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project assisted by the Australian Government’s arts funding and advisory body, the Australia Council, and the NSW Government through Create NSW.

This work is linked to symbolic and affective restitutional processes by survivors creating and mobilizing cultural and arts-based projects that include the writing of autobiographies and public exhibitions of creative documentary

66 Blayse, Parramatta Girls Home: Or Eyes to the Floor.
68 Fiona Nicoll “Reconciliation In and Out of Perspective: White Knowing, Seeing, Curating and Being at Home in and Against Indigenous Sovereignty,” in Whitening Race: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism, ed. Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2004). Sharyn Killen’s autobiography points out that between 9 and 15 percent of the girls at the Parramatta Girls House and the related high security Hay Girls Institution were indigenous girls who had been removed from their families. Killen and Lewis, The Inconvenient Child.
70 Lynette Aitken. The Parramatta Industrial School for Girls Experience.
71 Franklin, Belonging to Bad.
projects that use art, drawing, photography, and performance. As well as Sharyn Killens’s autobiography *The Inconvenient Child*, there is *14 Years of Hell: An Anthology of the Hay Girls Institution 1961–1974* compiled by Bonney Djuric; *Abandon all Hope*, also by Djuric, specifically about the Parramatta Girls homes; and Ivy Getchell’s *The Pea Picker’s Daughter*. One on-line account, *The Life of Riley* by Christina Green has links to a play, *Parramatta Girls*. The play was written by Alana Valentine and performed at Sydney’s Belvoir St Theatre and the Riverside Theatre, Parramatta, which has, in turn, brought further attention to the abuses that took place.

These processes, which are part of the restitutional assemblage, are then mobilized and consolidated by the affective and symbolic work of survivors and activists, the Parragirls. They have fought over several decades for public preservation of the site and recognition of the abuses that took place there, along with an understanding of this as part of institutionalized and systematic colonial violence against women and girls. The PFFP Memory Project has its own website, which acts as a mobilizing and campaigning force, as well as a digital archive and storytelling site. It initiated an exhibition, *Exposed to Moral Danger* (E. M. D), a symposium, conferences, academic papers/publications, and educational work. The PFFP Memory Project website about the Parragirls, and the art and social history projects they have developed generate further activities and programs to raise awareness “connecting past to present by engaging those who once resided in these institutions to actively participate in determining how their experiences are remembered, documented and interpreted.” In addition, the Parragirls organization and website connect people to the various layers of the different institutions that are a part of the Female Factory Precinct (the designated sub-region of Parramatta city where the Girls home and other related institutions stood). It then gives direction to other organizations and services.

This affective, as well as symbolic, labor seeks to have the site preserved rather than sold off for profit. The vision is for the site to be turned into a museum and education center that could then tell the wider globalized story of colonial and post-colonial institutionalized violence against girls and

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72 Killens and Lewis, *The Inconvenient Child*.
75 Christina Green, *The Life of Riley*, www.lifeofriley.net.au/.
77 www.pffpmemory.org.au/
78 Parramatta Female factory memory project, www.pffpmemoryproject.org/
women through the particular stories of those at the site. The websites support a campaign for a memorial at the site itself. The Parramatta Girls Home Memorial was put out for public tender overseen by the Department of Family and Community Services, with the Parragirls themselves submitting their own bid to tender. The formal memorial, in whatever form it takes, however, will not mark an end to restitution: but, rather, the memorial work may be understood as part of the overall multi-faceted restitutinal assemblage.

The restitutinal assemblage is situated within the twenty-first century “globital” age. The word “globital” is a combination of global with “bit,” which in computing terms is the smallest contiguous sequence of data. The word globital suggests the uneven, but combined dynamics of globalization with digitization that is enabling new kinds of multi-vocal globalized connectivities. The globital affords new kinds of participation and self-advocacy within restitutional work, as seen with the PFFP Memory Project. Digital connectivities and technologies in the globital age enable “trans-medial” storytelling that uses different media and modalities of story as well as multiple stories from different actors over time and over space that connect more easily with related struggles and atrocities elsewhere.

There are around 50 websites linked to Parramatta Girls Home and the related site of Hay Girls Institution. One provides a commentary on the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Australia) and archives a clear overview of many of the routes for survivors to tell their stories and for the on-going struggle for restitution. In 2017, the PFFP Memory Project, in partnership with the University of New South Wales, deployed a new form of “memory to action” to create “a better future” through the innovative use of 3D Virtual Reality technology creating an immersive environment that explores the Parramatta Girls’ Home with survivors’ stories. The VR film Parragirls, Past and Present, directed by Volker Kuchelmeister, was screened during October–November 2017 in Sydney and is free to download from the Internet.

Some of the key domains and trajectories of the restitutinal assemblage in relation to the Parramatta Girls Home site in Australia are summarized in Table 11.2.

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83 Lewis Blayse, Parramatta Girls Home: Or Eyes to the Floor, 6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Judicial</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Symbolic</th>
<th>Spiritual</th>
<th>Affective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign for preservation of Parramatta Precinct; tender for memorial and education center</td>
<td>Coroner’s Inquests in 2004 Senate Review with 20 hearings.</td>
<td>Apology by Kevin Rudd to Forgotten Australians.</td>
<td>Documentation, archives, art projects by Parramatta Female Factory Memory Project</td>
<td>Campaigns by indigenous Australians for land rights and spiritual recognition of site for Burramattagal people</td>
<td>Everyday emotional labor of survivors and descendants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign for personal compensation for survivors</td>
<td>Hearings of Historic Institutional Abuse arising in relation to new law on Historic Institutional Abuse 2014</td>
<td>Struggle with Parramatta city council and planners over National Heritage Listing.</td>
<td>Academic conferences and papers, docu-protests; news coverage; memory website; photographs and art works; autobiographies</td>
<td>Catholic Church to recognize its institutional system of abuse</td>
<td>Energetic, organic, embodied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggle for repayment of gains from church and state through unpaid labor of women and girls.</td>
<td>Transmission to local and globalized community, e.g., International Sites of Conscience</td>
<td>Play script - Parramatta Girls by Alana Valentina, educational work with schools.</td>
<td>Work of Narrative Therapists with survivors employed through arts projects</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

On-going restitutinal processes mobilized by survivors of Parramatta Girls Home working with relatives, journalists, academics, therapists, artists, state actors, and global agencies.
The case study suggests that restitution takes place across multiple entangled domains with intersecting trajectories that, at moments, secure or consolidate restitutitional processes, but which then undergo further transformation and change as part of the overall restitutional assemblage. While some areas are secured with clear areas of consolidation, it is evident that most are on-going, including the affective and spiritual work of survivors. It is also clear that the restitutional assemblage involves capital and labor from the economic to the affective, the symbolic to the spiritual across many spatial temporalities that are, at moments, transformational but rarely fixed or discrete and certainly not finished.

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter approached restitution from a transformative justice perspective illustrated with the example of an applied cultural memory project for human rights and justice at Parramatta Girls Home in Australia. This was understood through developing the original concept of the restitutional assemblage in which restitution is recognized as both a material and non-material process that operates across different domains and at various scales and levels from the highly local to the international. Restitution may involve the payment of money, the return of property, judicial processes, and state apology, but can also include cultural, symbolic, and spiritual acts and stories. Survivors voices are recognized as integral to these processes and ongoing campaigns, and received with the holistic and integral respect they deserve. Restitution takes place across various times and temporalities, through different artistic registers and domains that seek to put right past wrongs within the context of present inequalities.

Beyond this case study, the analytical tool of the restitutional assemblage has significant implications for the application of human rights within a transformational justice framework. First, the restitutional assemblage suggests that applied transformative justice demands that past human rights abuses are recognized through a variety of entangled domains, including the judicial, but also the political, symbolic, affective, and spiritual within a process of transforming present inequalities for the future. It recognizes that moments of securing or consolidating justice and recognition require a daily individual and collective struggle that needs communities to retell and mobilize stories of human agency, trust, and connection. It recognizes that abuses of human rights, especially those arising from structural and colonial violence, create unresolved psychological, cultural, economic, and social legacies accompanied by on-going structural violence against present generations.
Second, this could suggest that transformative justice incorporate non-linear approaches to temporality and spatiality. Restitution within a transitional justice framework is usually situated within Western models of teleological clock time in which past actions lead into the present and future. In contrast, temporality and spatiality within the restitutional assemblage are in practice more akin to a mappa mundi or folded cloth: time is not linear but, rather, is unevenly folded in on itself. Thus, the application of human rights within a transformative justice framework would work to address the past, but within the present context, while seeking to create a different future.

Third, the restitutional assemblage implies that the return of that which is diminished or taken from people through violence, conflict, abuse, and atrocity is not only impossible, it is also undesirable: a transformative justice framework does not separate human rights abuses from the poverty, inequality, or the structural violence underlying state terror, war, genocide, and colonialism. Human rights are then multi-disciplinary, multi-levelled with multi-sectoral actors and approaches motivated by on-the-ground evidence in which rights are holistic and interdependent. This includes native title to land and natural resources, where the spiritual, cultural, political, affective, and social rights intersect with economic rights. Further, it suggests that outcomes are emergent with new connections arising through processes that seek to include the agency inherent in self-organized advocacy work of survivors. This, in turn, gives recognition and significance to the material and non-material restitutional work of the individual, the collective, and the institutional.

In summary, the restitutional assemblage goes beyond critiques of restitution that have suggested the need for more holistic responses: the latter leans toward becoming simply a shopping list of everything that needs to be done. Instead, the restitutional assemblage surfaces the material and non-material as an on-going, emergent process involving a range of material and expressive acts happening over different time and space thresholds – in short, it surfaces a justice that transforms.

I would like to acknowledge the Darug People of the Burramattagal Clan as the traditional owners of the land on which the Parramatta Girls Home in Western Sydney, Australia, was built and which forms the case study for part of this chapter. The chapter is dedicated to Parragirls, the group of survivors who have worked to develop the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory

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Anna Reading

Project, which is an essential and on-going part of the restitutional assemblage for the site at the Parramatta Girls Home in Sydney, Australia. With heartfelt thanks to Bonney Djuric, Kellie Green, and Lily Hibberd for introducing me to their work, the site, and the project, I am especially grateful to Bonney Djuric and Lily Hibberd for their generous feedback on this chapter and their agreement to include their words.